

From: [Suero, Maryann](#)
To: [Klevs, Mardi](#); [Harris, Michael](#); [Dodds, Jennifer](#); [Guerriero, Margaret](#); [Cisneros, Jose](#); [Master, Edward](#)
Subject: FW: FYI - Clyde article and sidebar hot issue
Date: Thursday, April 17, 2014 12:05:00 PM
Attachments: [Sandusky Register Clyde Cancer Cluster Clip March 23.doc](#)

See below from John Peterson.

From: Peterson, John
Sent: Thursday, April 17, 2014 11:58 AM
To: Wolfe, Stephen; Suero, Maryann
Subject: FYI - Clyde article and sidebar hot issue

Hi Maryann and Steve,

My Public Affairs office finally showed me the Sandusky Register article about the Administrator's broken promise that caused all the fuss. I've attached it.

Your excellent hot issue was bottled up somewhere and wasn't sent to me until this morning so I was freaking out.

I decided to write a separate hot issue about the Register article. Maybe Anne or the RA will delete it, but I thought Gina should know what's being said about her. Below is what I wrote. thanks for all your help. Probably haven't heard the last from Clyde, have we.

- john

Nonresponsive

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Nonresponsive

Contact: From *Sandusky Register* newspaper article; compiled by John Peterson, R5 Public Affairs, 312-886-9858, Peterson.john@epa.gov

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EPA explains director's no-show

Heavily redacted letter sheds little light as to why Jackson never visited Clyde

Tom Jackson

Clyde

Mar 23, 2014

EPA officials don't want you to know why former EPA administrator Lisa Jackson never kept her promise to visit families in Sandusky County affected by the Clyde cancer cluster.

The U.S. EPA has finally responded to a Freedom of Information Act request designed to shed light on why former administrator Lisa Jackson never kept a promise to visit Clyde.

But the EPA's response, sent to the Sandusky Register 15 months after the request was made — and one year after an estimated completion date — sheds little light on the decision.

The document is heavily redacted, with almost all relevant information blacked out.

Warren Brown, Sandusky County administrator, is the father of Alexa Brown, 11, who died of cancer in 2009. Her death is considered part of the Clyde-area cancer cluster.

[Click HERE for more Clyde Cancer Cluster coverage](#)

Brown was given a copy of the EPA's response to the FOIA request. He said he wasn't surprised the EPA blacked out large portions of the document.

"It's big government at its worst, not caring about the constituency of the people that they serve," he said.

"You just wonder what could be so damning they'd have to black it out"

Lisa Jackson was the administrator of the U.S. EPA from January 2009 to February 2013. After she left, she took a job with the Apple company in California, running the company's environmental programs.

Through a spokesman, Jackson declined an interview request for this story.

In October 2011, Jackson wrote a letter to Warren and his wife, Wendy Brown.

"During the coming months, I will be closely following the EPA's work in Sandusky County and I look forward to traveling to Clyde to meet with you and other community members to discuss the results of our investigation," Jackson wrote.

The letter to the Browns doesn't mention a date, but a U.S. EPA press statement, released on Oct. 21, 2011, stated Jackson "plans to visit Sandusky County next year when results of the investigation are available"

Jackson never responded to follow-up inquiries from the Browns or from the Sandusky Register about whether she would show up. The silence continued through 2012, when Obama won re-election largely thanks to carrying Ohio, a key swing state.

After she announced her departure from the EPA, the Register tried a documents request in an effort to find out why she never showed up or answered questions about the matter.

The Freedom of Information Act request was submitted Jan. 16, 2013. It asked for any emails written or received by Jackson or her press spokeswoman, Alisha Johnson, pertaining to a possible trip to Clyde to discuss the Clyde cancer cluster.

In February, the EPA wrote back, granting a fee waiver for the request — the newspaper would not have to pay any fees to obtain the documents. A tracking document on the EPA's website estimated the request would be completed by March, two months after the request was completed.

After that, however, months of silence followed. Inquiries to EPA press staffers yielded nothing.

A few days ago, the Register tried again.

This time, the paper got a response from Jonathan Newton, an EPA attorney. Newton apologized, saying somehow the matter had been overlooked. He sent the EPA's response letter and the EPA documents.

The response letter, dated Aug. 12, 2013, and written by Eric Wachter, stated: "We conducted a search and located responsive records. Upon review, the EPA determined that portions of the records are exempt from mandatory disclosure pursuant to FOIA Exemption 5, 5 U.S.C. which protects the deliberative process. The records are being released to you with corresponding redactions"

The heavily-redacted document does document that the Sandusky Register repeatedly asked if and when Jackson would show up.

Numerous emails show Josh Singer, the EPA's regional spokesman, asking officials in Washington what he's allowed to say in response to the inquiries.

The emails show at one point, Susan Hedman, an EPA regional administrator, drafted a response for Jackson's signature, apparently explaining herself. The letter apparently was never sent, and the response was blacked out.

After Jackson left, President Barack Obama appointed Gina McCarthy as the EPA's new chief. After the Senate confirmed McCarthy, the Browns' attorney, Alan Mortensen, wrote to McCarthy on Sept. 3, 2013. Mortensen reminded McCarthy of Jackson's promise to come to Clyde and asked McCarthy to honor the promise by coming to Clyde herself.

Six months later, the Clyde cancer cluster families still have not received a response from McCarthy.

EPA Superfund director Richard Karl did send a Sept. 26 letter to Mortensen, signed by someone else, but the letter does not refer to the invitation to McCarthy. It only contained a rehash of the EPA's efforts in Clyde.

The Associated Press reported March 16 that heavy censorship of documents released under the Freedom of Information Act has been a hallmark of the Obama administration.

"The Obama administration more often than ever censored government files or outright denied access to them last year under the U.S. Freedom of Information Act, according to a new analysis of federal data by The Associated Press" the article said.